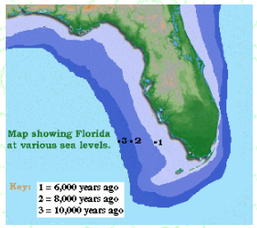
1) Early History



Although Florida has been emerged from the sea for 25 million years, some of the southern portions of Florida are among the youngest landscapes in North America. Paleo Indians were the first inhabitants of the state, present at least 10,000 years ago. They were the descendants of people who crossed into North America from Asia during the Pleistocene epoch. During that time, the climate was dry, sea levels were low and the coasts were extended out into today's oceans, resulting in a state that was twice the size. Paleo Indians were migratory people, hunting big game such as mammoths, mastodons and bison. Water bodies such as lakes and rivers did not exist at this time, so they had to travel to areas where surface water collected from rain and seepage. The Paleo Indian culture gave way to the Archaic culture, where changes in Florida's climate resulted in the melting of glaciers and rising of sea levels. As such, water sources were not in short supply, and people had more places to set up camp and could stay longer at each camp. During this time, the megafauna became extinct, so these people relied on smaller game such as deer, fish, and shellfish. The soils in this area were formed in the Pleistocene era, before the time of Paleo Indian inhabitation. Tropical hammocks, a few of which you will be passing through as you continue, were actually offshore barrier reefs at one time. The dissolving limestone provides enriched soil resulting in varied plant life.

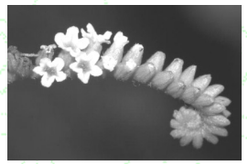
2)Recent History- This wildlife blind currently overlooks an improved pasture that will be restored to a wetlands system. Prior to cattle grazing, however, portions of the property were used for tomato farming. Common cattle ranching practices involve constructing interior ditches and planting non-native forage grasses such as bahia. As part of the restoration efforts, some of the ditches will be filled to restore the historic flow patterns of the site, and abundant native dormant seed should regenerate the original wet prairie community. Come back from time to time to see the effects of this wetland restoration!

3) Cabbage Palm - *Sabal palmetto* - This is a characteristic tree species found in hammocks. The word *hammock* is a derivative of an early Native American word that means "shady place". These areas were important to early peoples as they provided shelter and a food source.

4) At this point, turn left into hammock to continue with trail, or go straight (south) to the second wildlife blind.

5) Sugarberry - *Celtis laevigata* - Also known as Sugar Hackberry, or sometimes mistakenly called Hackberry, this tree is easily recognized by the knobby, warty growths on its bark. The berries secrete a sweet sticky substance which attracts millions of mealybugs, who engorge themselves with the secretions and produce a sweet, dew-like substance sometimes referred to as "ghost rain". Many songbirds also eat the fruits and help disperse the seeds.

6) Scorpion's Tail - *Heliotropum angiospermum* - This plant reportedly gets its name not only by the flowers that are curved like a scorpion's tail, but also because the insects were once common where the plants grow. They were so common that Jonathan Dickinson, a Quaker merchant that was shipwrecked in 1696, commented on them when he was forced to lie among them in a Jaega hut in 1699 on the coast in an area now called Jonathan Dickinson State Park. (*Outside the hammock, trail continues to the left.)*



7) Wild Lime - *Zanthoxylum fagara* - Many native peoples used the wood from this plant for bows and arrows, food, medicines and dyes. Be on the lookout for the Giant Swallowtail, a butterfly of which plant is a host for.

8) Strangler Fig - *Ficus aurea* - This tree, which also possesses fruits attractive to birds, usually starts out by growing on another tree. Once the seeds germinate, the fast-growing fig sends down aerial roots which reach the ground and eventually engulfs the host tree. As the roots enlarge, the fig becomes self-supporting. The host tree eventually is killed by shading from the profuse branches and leaves. Some early peoples ate the fruits produced by this tree, fashioned arrows from the stems, and used the roots to make bowstrings, for lashing house parts, stringing meat, and fishing lines. As extracts from the sap are antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, and analgesic, early peoples also used it for treating wounds and chewed the latex like gum.

9) Laurel Oak (*Quercus laurifolia)* - Oaks provide acorns that are not only desired food for wildlife, but were also consumed by early peoples. In fact, a portion of what appears to be a log mortar carved from oak ,thought to be used to grind seeds dating back to Paleo times, was recovered from a spring in northern Florida. Unlike the long lived Live Oak, which can reach 300 years of age, the Laurel Oak has an average lifespan of only 70 years. However, it has a faster growth rate than the Live Oak. The knobby growths, or conks, you see on these trees are characteristic of older trees, where the decay process is already taking place.

10) Live Oak (*Quercus virginicus*) – Oaks also support a variety of epiphytic plants such as ferns that also provided sources of food and medicine.

11) Potato Tree - *Solanum erianthum* --This plant, named for its fruits, is from the genus of plants which include the nightshade family, known for its poisonous compounds. Some think the genus name *Solanum* is derived from "solamen", meaning "comfort". Others think it originated from "sol" ("sun") due to the arrangement of the yellow stamens surrounded by white petals which look like miniature suns. This genus also includes non poisonous plants such as tobacco, potatoes and tomatoes. The species name *erianthum* is translated into Creek and Mikasuki to mean "old man's tobacco".

12) Red Maple - *Acer rubrum* - Europeans found indigenous people harvesting sap from both Red and Sugar Maples to produce a sweet drink and for use in cooking. Perhaps very early peoples used it in the same manner.

13) Blue Flag Iris - *Iris hexagona* - Some later indigenous cultures used the roots of this plant to treat ulcers, liver and urinary problems. Iris was one of the plants given to Seminoles bitten by gators.

14) Forest Dynamics - Nutrients are cycled through this ecosystem through leaf fall and decomposition. This is in contrast to communities (such as pine flatwoods) that require fire to cycle nutrients. As you have seen, fallen trees create gaps in the forest that give the understory vegetation access to sunlight, allowing those plants to grow. As you enter the hammock, keep your eyes open for shelf fungi performing very important work on dead trees.

15) Stopper - *Eugenia* - No one knows for sure how the name "stopper" came into existence, but there are a couple theories. One is that since the plants are difficult to pass through, especially where they grow in dense thickets near the coasts, they "stop" a person's passage. However, a more likely explanation is that the fruits contain tannins which served as a remedy for diarrhea and "stopped" the problem. Wood of many Stopper species is strong and durable and has been used for a variety of items including bows. Seminoles likely used the branches of these trees as ramrods during the Third Seminole War when they used muzzle-loading guns.

16) Papaya - *Carica papaya* - Known as "pawpaw" in some parts of the world, this plant is not to be confused with the Pawpaw (*Asimina sp.*) found in Florida. Native to tropical America, seeds were probably brought to this state from the Bahamas, and the plant is considered to be naturalized in many areas. It was commonly grown in southern and central Florida in home gardens and on a small commercial scale. Papaya would not have been around during the time of the early peoples that occupied this site, but is used today by present cultures. It is most known for the enzyme *papain,* which is used as a meat tenderizer and as a digestive aid. It is also used to clarify beer, to treat natural fibers such as wool and silk before dyeing, to remove hair from hides before tanning, and also serves as an additive in the manufacture of rubber. It has antibacterial properties, can be used as a soap substitute, and dried leaves have been smoked as a tobacco substitute and to relieve asthma. (*Outside the hammock, trail continues straight ahead.)*

17) Citrus – Another non-native plant that was introduced to the state by the Spanish. Hammocks in this area were planted by pioneers, and the citrus of this area, along with that along Ten Mile Creek, were the only to survive the great freeze of 1894-95. Sour Oranges, which can be found on this site, were originally introduced by the Spaniards into St. Augustine. They were popular with the local Indians and early settlers and were later exported to England. Sour orange trees can be found in the hammocks within the Everglades. The first sweet orange budwood was grafted onto Sour Orange trees by pioneers, and, from that time on, the Sour Orange became more widely grown as a rootstock in all citrus-producing areas of the world than for its fruit. (*Outside the hammock, trail continues to the left to double back the way you came.*)

Teague Hammock Natural Area is a 305 acre site that contains early Native American mounds within it's hammocks. The site is also home to the largest known Simpson's Stopper Tree (*Myrcianthes fragrans*).

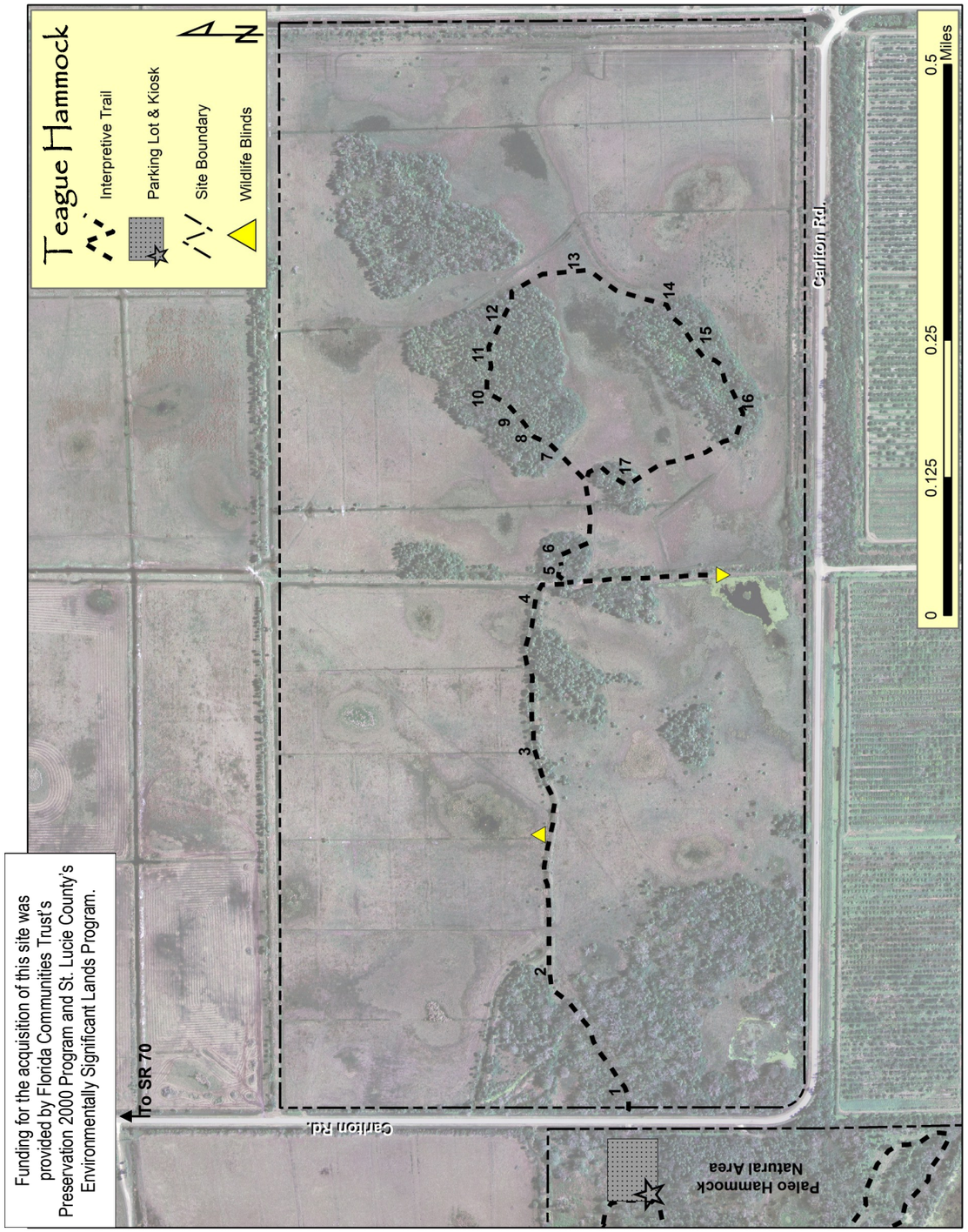
2 miles of interpretive trail take you through these ancient hammocks and past wildlife blinds which overlook the sites many depression marshes.

The trail head is located **across** from Paleo Hammock Natural Area, 4 miles south of SR 70 on Carlton Road, Fort Pierce.

Guidelines and Safety Information:

- Be cautious of uneven trail surfaces
- Please remain on the trails.
- Carry adequate drinking water.
- In case of lightning, seek a low area away from trees, fence lines and tall objects.
- In case of emergency, call 911.
- While hiking the trail you may encounter animals indigenous to this area. Please observe from a safe distance.
- Leave all plant life intact.
- Please leave site cleaner than you found it. "Pack it in, pack it out."
- Use at own risk.

To learn more about St. Lucie County's natural heritage, there are more than 20 self-guiding interpretive trails located within the Natural Areas/Preserves. Each trail describes the most common plants, as well as significant geographical and historical features of the site.



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Teague Hammock

Preserve

Interpretive Trail

St. Lucie County
Environmental Resources
Department
2300 Virginia Avenue
Ft. Pierce, FL 34982

772-462-2526

http://www.stlucieco.gov/erd/environmental_lands.htm
Gates Open: Sunrise to Sunset (11/11)